

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

SELECT COMMITTEE - STUDENT JOURNEY

MINUTES of a meeting of the Select Committee - Student Journey held in the Swale 2, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Wednesday, 1 June 2011.

PRESENT: Mr K Smith (Chairman), Mr M C Dance (Vice-Chairman), Mr A R Chell, Mr I S Chittenden, Mr P J Homewood, Mr R J Lees, Mr S C Manion and Mr M J Northey

IN ATTENDANCE: Miss T A Grayell (Democratic Services Officer) and Mr G Romagnuolo (Policy Overview Research Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

6. Interview with Roger Gabriel, Kent Economic Board Skills Manager, Kent County Council *(Item 1)*

Please introduce yourself and outline the roles and responsibilities which your post involves.

My current role is as the KEB Skills Manager, but I have previously taught for more than 20 years in secondary, further and higher education. I have also run small businesses and employed 9 staff, so have experience from both the provider and employer focus. My current role is as an interface between businesses and educators, and my experience has enabled me to reflect on these connections in the short-, medium- and long-term. By short-term, I mean the day-to-day issues in staffing a business, maintaining staff turnover, etc. Medium-term planning would be to look ahead and plan for developments likely to occur over the next year, e.g. opening a new facility. Long-term planning would be to look at the future investments from the business that required new skills and start to build now those skills which would be needed to achieve this future direction.

In my role within KEB, KCC and with other partners, we have arranged 3 sector-themed business growth events; for the rural economy, construction and low-carbon energy generation sectors. These have been well received, with more than 400 business in attendance. More are planned, to cover health and social care, digital and creative media, advanced manufacturing (engineering manufacturing) and partnering with VisitKent on one for the tourism/leisure sector.

From these events, trends are emerging around the shortages of certain skills which are both generic and specialist. Generic skills so far identified include leadership, management and 'attitude', and specialist skills include technician skills and ICT as well as skills which apply more specifically to particular industries. For example, businesses at the rural event reported a shortage of trained chainsaw certificate holders. There is a strict minimum-age limit on being able to train for and hold such a certificate, and hence few colleges offer these courses. Also, young people aiming for jobs at a wind farm will need a very precise mix of hydraulic and electrical qualifications, working at height and working in confined spaces. Whilst these are available separately, few providers are currently offering them as a package.

Generally, employers identify the skills they require to fill a post and then seek to attract good candidates by using competitive salary levels, etc. Business is telling us that there is generally a shortage of young people qualified at levels 3 and 4, and that there is a shortage in research and development.

New certificated training courses are difficult to introduce and establish. There is a long and involved process to gain funding, ratification and accreditation, and it can be several years between starting to set up a course and turning out the first students ready to take up jobs. In some industries, much can change in that few years, and there is a danger that the skills of new students might already be partly out of date, especially in fast-changing sectors like computing. One way to bring courses online quicker is to combine existing ratified modules together in new ways as happened in Folkestone, where SAGA were looking for IT graduates. Their aim was to keep jobs local and they were able to put together bespoke training, using the existing modules they needed.

KEB works closely with partners from local businesses, including the Chambers of Commerce and the Federation of Small Businesses, the Institute of Directors and the Confederation of British Industry (CBI). In a report from the CBI, published recently, they list what they look for in a new recruit; they value attitude first, then social skills, then business literacy, all ahead of specialist/academic knowledge. This further demonstrates that there is a mismatch between what employers are looking for and what schools seem to be preparing young people for. There was a pilot scheme called 'The Work Ready award' which emphasised the value and importance of non-academic skills such as attendance, punctuality and self-discipline. This pilot was only run for students interesting in joining the construction industry. One key aspect was the continuous assessment which took place, which meant that a consistently high standard was required if the young person was to achieve this award. If the standard of one of the measured skills lapsed, the award could be withdrawn. As someone who ran a small business, the skills I most looked for in a new recruit were self-discipline and social skills, sometimes called customer focused skills.

The CBI research also identified the weaknesses that still exist in basic skills that employers are looking for. The research showed that 41% of employers were concerned by recruits' basic literacy, 39% were concerned about levels of basic numeracy, and 73% were concerned about basic sentence construction and grammar. Another factor that is affecting qualifications is the way we assess young people, and then the way in which they apply for jobs. Most application processes now use an online form, which has spell-checking and grammar checking facilities. Handwriting or punctuation get little practice. I cannot remember the last time I received a handwritten letter.

Two questions I would pose for the Select Committee to consider would be; what are the key influences over young people's choices? and what are the key influences over educational providers' choices?

I would suggest that, for young people, parents and peer pressure are both very important. However, for education providers, making the best use of their existing staff would seem to be a key concern, as well as which courses attract most funding to maximise income. The number of students who take up employment upon completing their studies is not currently measured. The careers service does not appear to play a strong role in shaping providers' choices.

As a result of the sector meetings, KEB, through its Skills for Business growth group, is establishing a business-led group to examine the mismatch between what employers need and what providers at School/Further and Higher Education prepare young people for, and how local businesses communicate these issues to local schools and colleges.

How could the voluntary sector fit into this process, for instance to allow young people to work and gain experience to help them find paid employment?

For me, there would appear to be more opportunity for graduates to benefit from this experience, as they have other skills apart from their academic ability. The same would not necessarily be true for some 16 – 18 year olds. Employers see voluntary work as evidence of a good attitude towards using time constructively and gaining experience, and they do view it kindly.

If you could bring in new policy, what would be the best way to structure services to benefit young people?

In the current system, attitudinal and academic aspects are disconnected. It tends to pick out young people's shortcomings rather than emphasise what they are good at and enhance it. We operate a deficit model, identifying what a young person is weak at and then attempting to remedy this. What is needed is a positive model, identifying what the young person is good at and then building on this success, picking up new skills on the way.

What often shapes what you do as a job is 'happenstance'; you fall into something that you hadn't studied for or hadn't planned to do. That's how I got my first job and I'm sure other Members had similar experiences.

We need to look at who influences young people's choices. Parents seem to be the key, so we need to try to influence them, although this is proving very difficult. As a teacher those parents who you most need to speak to are the hardest to reach, and do not seem to turn up at parents' evenings. Perhaps information, advice and guidance on careers options needs to be more aimed at parents? A young person's peer group is an important influence on choice, but we are very poor at affecting this. We also have limited scope to influence what providers offer. Businesses also need some help to become more in touch with recent changes in education (eg. many still refer to young people doing O-levels), so we also need to educate them.

Is there a difference between what employers want and what they actually need?

Employers now increasingly have the scope to offer bespoke training. What they require are young people with sufficient basic skills to make the most of this training. What schools need to provide is the well-prepared clay for employers to mould. Employers see the strengths that young people have and how they can use them.

Many companies have very specialised needs. Can the KCC encourage smaller industries to train recruits themselves, so they meet the company's needs? In that way, they would be helping themselves.

At the sector events KEB have arranged, there has been a strong message that the networking aspect has been very valuable, and we could look to extend these opportunities. KCC, with a range of partners, helped establish a business network for the Creative Industries called 'media tree'. This is now developing into a social

enterprise company. It might be worth looking at other sectors and whether networks such as this might be profit them. Some industries do not get together to share best practice and knowledge, but at the Business growth meetings, our feedback would indicate that they found it a useful opportunity.

We encourage young people to go to University, but some do not suit this and do better if they enter work at 18 and train with the help of an employer. They could also use some sort of sandwich-type course if this is still available. Are we missing an opportunity by not doing this?

Some courses do mix practical work with business skills and input from an employer. However, careful planning is required if these are to give the students a good experience and working environment.

Some employers seem to demand certain skills without offering to train young people to develop them.

In some industries, health and safety regulations place a minimum age limit at which a young person can take part in practical work, eg on a building site. Young people need to be able to make a contribution to the work of the business for their presence to be useful. Traditional 'work experience' arrangements don't appearing to be working.

When I was young, apprenticeships were something which young people went into as soon as they left school. Does this still happen?

In some sectors which traditionally used apprenticeships – eg construction – this does still happen, although there is now more choice of training and a greater choice of sectors to enter. Employers have been keen on the idea of apprenticeships when it has been clearly explained to them, but this is where we need to establish better communications.

Do they still last for five years?

Most are linked to qualifications and last for a maximum of two years, but if taken from a Level 1 to Level 4 this might easily take 5 years. There is a mix of academic and vocational qualification and training, and a debate over the relative merits of academic study and breadth of practical experience gained is still going on. Employers seem to prefer breadth of experience over academic qualification. Vocational training is highly valued in Germany, which is still very much an industrial nation. The type and range of vocational opportunity has expanded much recently, eg IT has now become a basic skill which is needed by most businesses.

Skills Centres are a good initiative, but how are these viewed by and supported by business?

Employers are interested in understanding the new training offers. Centres that offer employment opportunities and stepping stones to Higher Education are particularly good news. Swale Skills Centre in Sittingbourne is a particularly good example as it is based very close to local business, both geographically and in terms of relationships.

I think it would be good for the Select Committee to make a recommendation for more of such locally-placed centres.

Yes, it is widely recognised that students do not travel far for Level 1 and 2 courses, whereas they would for higher skills. Therefore, it follows that more local centres offering the lower skills are required.

Can you comment on what the Wolf report cautions about young people specialising too early?

Young people cannot specialise as early as they used to be able to. In the days of O levels it was normal to only take 6 or 7, whereas now it is common to take 12 or more GCSEs.

7. Interview with Sue Dunn, Head of 14 - 19 Entitlement Team, Kent County Council
(Item 2)

Please can you introduce yourself and outline your role and responsibilities?

I am the Head of the 14 -19 Entitlement Team at KCC. My role is to steer strategy and give strategic leadership. My team was formed 5 years ago to address the fact that vocational education was not being sufficiently covered by the secondary school curriculum. It was not applicable for the needs of those pupils who were not able to pursue an academic route, and did not prepare them for employment. KCC invested £20 million, which set up vocational centres (of which, there are now 25 in the county), but this provision was for 14 – 19 year olds only. KCC was praised in the Wolf report and also by the Audit Commission for its approach. It introduced a new Diploma course to enhance the employability of young people, and some 8,500 14 – 16 year olds have so far benefitted from it.

When the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) was disbanded, their staff also came into the KCC and my team expanded, although no funding has materialised for any additional activity. We have now gained the Connexions contract, so the team changed again and we now have a broader role. The Connexions role we took on was to provide IAG to a targeted group, ie those who were at risk of disengaging, and support young people at key points, and to work with those who are NEET.

We need to look after and meet the needs of learners and employers. We also cover the careers service IAG role, for which there is £15 million in government grants to influence the offer and build capacity, although this funding will cease in March 2012. We have to track all 16+ learners and ensure that all partners (schools, employers, etc) are involved in shaping the programme. KCC has put in £10 million for this extra work but this might end when the government funding ends.

Our key role is planning and working with providers on the offer to young people of 16+. We look at the locality and the entitlement and use data, including the economic profile of the district. From this we can identify mismatches in needs and provision.

We provide a high-quality IAG website, which we know is used by 91% of year 11 pupils, and for this we broker good quality data. We also provide a helpline service for young people and their parents and carers. We find that October is a busy time for young people coming for advice and guidance, as they have dropped out of a course and need support to make new choices. My team bridges young people and colleges, and the service we offer has to be very personally tailored. We manage the 25 Vocational Centres I mentioned earlier.

The new Education Bill in October 2011 will affect what we do, as well as the introduction of the National Careers Service in 2012, and we must be ready for these

major changes. Other recent changes, such as the ending of the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) scheme, which helped support young people financially while they studied, has changed young people's work patterns, and from this change there is more danger now that they will drop out of a course as they cannot afford to stay on it.

What connection do you have to the Youth Service?

We used to have a link via Angela Slaven, but I am now in discussion with Nigel Baker on how we can link together. We could possibly include some detached youth workers in the vocational centres. This gives an interesting opportunity for cross-working.

You say that part of your team's role is planning, but how do you follow through and influence things getting done?

Getting it done depends on strategic partnerships. The 14 – 19 Forum sets priorities and has good engagement and influence, but no direct power to move things forward. There will be a 'stock-take' in September 2011 of how various bodies fit together. The Local Authority can intervene, for example, to seek more Level 3 provision, and I'd like to see this role being more robust in the future. National funding mechanisms are a barrier as they rely solely on success data, so we need to address this. I will be making a recommendation to the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) to address this lack of incentive. Lots of young people undertake Level 1 training but few do Level 3, which employers most need.

We have been told that employers also place importance on attitude and personal qualities. Do we build these elements in to the training we provide to young people?

It is possible to add 'soft' qualifications to increase the number of young people who pass courses. Qualifications have to be fit for purpose, and emphasis is still on creativity and innovation rather than punctuality and attendance, which employers want. Some courses include and emphasise the element which will help them score best in league tables, sometimes at the expense of enhancing young people's employability.

There has been a suggestion that the Freedom Pass be extended to include 17 and 18 year olds. What impact might this have on young people accessing courses and work?

We are working on data now to show the likely impact of this, and there will be some recommendations to Cabinet in June about subsidising the Pass beyond 16. It is likely to have a big impact on opening up part-time and weekend employment options. I hope colleges will contribute to this to share the financial risk, and it could be used as a lever for colleges to change their offer. As we seek to extend opportunities for Apprenticeships, etc, an extended Freedom Pass will be a huge incentive.

Will your team take over strategic planning, control and funding of all IAG services?

Yes. A transition plan is in place, and we need to be ready for April 2012, when the government specification will be known. This will emerge as part of the National Careers Service. KCC is looking at what role it wishes to take in Kent's version of the National Careers Service.

We are looking at pastoral care as part of the student journey. Can you comment on the provision of this?

This varies, as a statutory requirement to provide it has now been revoked. Legislation around this is now permissive rather than prescriptive, so it's very open as to what providers choose to provide, and how.

The big increase in course fees will inevitably deter some young people from going to University. What sort of picture can we expect to see for those who do not go?

Advisors have a moral obligation to provide young people with the right information about student loans, and there is a lot of misinformation around at the moment, which does not give a clear picture. For example, many young people are unaware that, until someone is earning £30,000 per year, they do not need to make any repayment of their student loan. There are also other options available for Higher Education; students can leave full time education at 18 and train in a job, or access higher courses in places other than at University.

We've heard about apprenticeships, but don't these tend to be mostly in jobs that boys want to do? What equivalent is there for girls?

'Apprenticeships' is a very broad description, and there are many options which interest and attract young women, eg in the Health and Social Care sector. I don't believe there is a gender imbalance. I think energy should be re-focussed on apprenticeships. Some parents have a negative image of apprenticeships. It would also be helpful to have a pre-apprenticeship pathway. Only 51% of young people pass English and Maths at Level 2 and we need to increase this.

What can KCC do to influence the breadth of IAG that is made available?

By combining its energies around how young people are engaged, and by having a good communication strategy. We need to be innovative and use social networking sites and engage young people in the democratic process.

We need to de-silo the youth agenda!

Does legislation and bureaucracy get in the way – eg health and safety, data protection, etc?

Health and Safety requirements can trip up young people going into all sorts of jobs which involve transport and logistics, and we need to mentor more employers to encourage them to take on more young people. There is some duplication here, and support needs to be co-ordinated. Employers need to be able to see what it is in it for them.

How can this Select Committee help you?

We work in a diverse landscape in which 80 – 90% of schools are not in Local Authority control. Our role is to support vulnerable young people. We need to be clear of our strategic direction and hold providers to account for their culture and attitude. The Select Committee can be part of this.

How do you cater for looked after children (LAC)?

This group traditionally moves around a lot and they cannot take their accredited learning with them from one placement to another. As they have no transferable record of their achievements to take with them, they can find themselves having to start at a lower level and re-do things they have already completed, and this can be

very de-motivating. What they need is an electronically transferable record that they can own and be proud of. This can hopefully be developed via the National Careers Service.

One observation that I would make is that the removal of various government grants has had a disproportionately large impact on those aged 14 – 24, and this is also an area of extensive youth unemployment. Much of the KCC's Early Intervention Grant must be directed to support other areas such as Early Years provision and social care, so there is not much left for the agenda for 14 – 19 year olds.

8. Interview with Lucy Ann Bett, Social Inclusion Officer, and Wayne Gough, Interim County Manager, Supporting Independence Programme, Kent County Council

(Item 3)

Please introduce yourselves and set out your roles and responsibilities.

(WG) I am the Interim County Manager of the Supporting Independence Programme (SIP). I used to work for Shell International in London in a social investment role. Shell had a scheme which supported young people between the ages of 16 and 30 to start their own business. I then worked for Canterbury City Council in a Scrutiny role, and in KCC as a Staff Officer to the Communities Managing Director.

(LAB) I am a social inclusion officer in the SIP. I joined KCC 7 years ago as part of the graduate programme. Apprenticeships are a big part of the SIP, along with delivery, partnership working and welfare reform. We run employment programmes for young people, including the delivery of the Future Jobs Fund, through which we found 6 month work placements for 890 long term unemployed young people. We also run 9 work clubs in libraries in Kent, which offer IAG. We work with Tomorrow's People, a national charity which helps families who are out of work.

(LAB) There is a draft Apprenticeship Strategy, which will go to Cabinet on 20 June. This sets out plans for the next three years. We would like apprenticeships to be seen as the skill option of choice for the young people of Kent, and we need to raise the level of understanding of apprenticeships and what is involved. They are currently seen as a second class option.

We will support businesses so they are ready to take on an apprentice. Currently, only 3,500 of the 48,000 employers in Kent take apprentices, so we need to identify the barriers to them taking up this option. We ran a pilot to help employers to recruit young people, and this has been very successful. Employers have acknowledged this as a good service.

We support young people with IAG in what can be a confusing landscape. We help them to look at their options seriously and take on the commitment of training for and choosing a career.

We also have a Vulnerable Learners project, which has 80 places to support young carers, young parents, young offenders and young people with Learning Difficulties or Disabilities. Our aim is to make apprenticeships more accessible to these groups.

Kent Success has been very successful, having supported over 400 young people and shown a 76% achievement rate. 87% of the young people who take part in this have gone on to full time employment.

We need to streamline our services and make them more efficient and seek to sell our innovative work to the rest of the public sector.

We are also looking to develop apprenticeship career paths in Kent where there is a skills shortage, such as social work, trading standards and health visitors.

We have a strategic development role, related to the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) role in Kent. This only works with companies which have more than 250 employees, so does not include small and medium sized businesses. The message about apprenticeships needs to reach young people, however NAS does not do learner engagement.

(WG) One challenge we have is to persuade employers to align their apprenticeship schemes to the academic year. As young people look at websites to make their choices at 15 or 17, they need to be able to find out about and access apprenticeships so they can apply for these at the same time. Recruiting at the optimum time will mean employers will get the best young apprentices. Parents need to be given a better image of apprenticeships, and examples can be used to show the possibilities, eg Boots train dispensing apprentices and offer a structure through which a young person can rise as they complete each stage of training, and each stage brings enhanced pay.

How many of the vulnerable young people which SIP works with achieve qualifications at Level 3? The Wolf report says that English and Maths skills for this group need to be enhanced.

(WG) Of 16 – 19 year olds last year, 2,000 studied at Level 2 and 800 at Level 3. I find that employers ask for a GCSE pass at grade C in Maths and English, when what they are actually looking for is someone who is able to read, write and add up. They don't recognise or understand other forms of qualifications.

Why is the IAG so confusing?

(LAB) Young people do not seem to find IAG via school, so this does not seem to be covered by schools. Many young people find information via the Direct.Gov website. They need more information about the range of apprenticeships, and that many more subjects are available than hairdressing, plumbing and the other 'traditional' subjects.

Schools could be encouraged to promote apprenticeships as a positive choice.

What incentive is there for employers to take on apprentices? The word seems to put people off.

(WG) The image could be improved by comparing apprenticeship to something like a junior doctor's training, which could be seen as a type of apprenticeship. It is essentially 'work-based learning'. In Germany, Apprenticeships are seen as an alternative to University, and in some ways are seen as being superior to a University course.

(LAB) In terms of incentives to employers, we cannot give them money, but we can encourage them to take on apprenticeships as a way of 'growing your own workforce' which will build in loyalty and allow them to train staff to best meet their needs. Young recruits can take 2 to 3 months before they start being genuinely useful, so employers need to be encouraged to take a more long-term view. Colleagues from my team liaise with employers to match them with the most suitable apprentices. If

the Select Committee were to make a recommendation which supports this initiative it would be most helpful.

Could we make use of employers who have had apprentices to act as ambassadors for the scheme and encourage other businesses to take them on? Spreading the workload would make better use of KCC resources. We also need to work on persuading parents.

(LAB) Yes, I agree that we could develop this mentoring role. Perhaps an event like 'speed-dating' would be useful, to make initial connections between employers and young people. Employers could talk about what their company does and let young people ask questions and see if they suit each other. We could make use of both these threads, as well as employers and successful past apprentices going into schools to tell them about their positive experiences and encourage others to try it.

(WG) We could help employers to see the financial benefits to them; for instance, how cheaply they could start employing an apprentice, and the benefits of training them in-house. For the first year, an employer would only have to pay an apprentice £100 per week, but the second year would include subsidised training. At the end of the programme, they would have no obligation to take on the apprentice, but for many it would not make economic sense to let go of someone in whom they have invested so much time and training, and who is contributing to the bottom line of the business.

Once in a company, what status would an apprentice have - would they count as 'employed' or 'in training'?

(LAB) They would be employed under an apprentice contract .

Could the Freedom Pass be added to their employment package?

(LAB) Yes, we could seek to add this to their first year salary.

Kent Works was good, but what is available now?

(LAB) Education Business Partnership, but this is due to lose its funding so there is much uncertainty around its future and I'm not sure that it will survive.

(WG) There are different ways to access apprenticeships, eg via college, and 120 organisations in Kent deliver apprenticeships. This system offers much flexibility to meet employers' needs.

Can you tell us about the Future Jobs Fund?

(WG) This was to help the long-term unemployed between 18 and 24. A large number of the group of young people who were referred through our Future Jobs Fund programme clearly had mental health issues.

What will be the KCC's future role in apprenticeships – planning? directing?

(WG) This is an area of growth for Kent so it will develop a strategic role of leadership and guidance. It will raise the level of understanding of the scheme (which the NAS will not do), identify gaps in delivery and try to fill them; eg providing support to small businesses.

Do we advertise successes?

(WG) The 'Kent Apprentice of the Year' awards this year showed a very good standard, which raised the bar. This success will breed more success.

It has been suggested that we change the name 'Apprentice', but I think we should keep it as people know the name, and it does have good connotations.

What do other European countries do in this sort of area?

(WG) As we have said, in Germany, apprenticeships are seen as an alternative and even superior option to University. Germany values vocational skills, and employers in companies and organisations over a certain size have to take on apprentices. Switzerland, Australia and Sweden also have good schemes. Because some people in the UK see apprenticeships as being a second choice, this influences employers also to view them as a second choice. We need to rebuild the value of apprenticeships.

(LAB) We are leading an INTERREG funding bid, including partners from France, Belgium and the Netherlands. *We can send the Committee some written details of this.*

Is there any industry in which apprenticeships are not appropriate?

(WG) I am not aware of any, as young people trained to Levels 4 and 5 make good quality recruits. In some industries there are health and safety constraints, eg young people working on a building site or in a care home have to be over 18.

In the construction industry, there is not necessarily an age limit (employers tend to build those in themselves) but anyone working more than 16 hours a week on site has to have knowledge of health and safety procedures.

(WG) Something else we have in Kent is a Vulnerable Learners project, which addresses the needs of particular groups who are more at risk of experiencing problems accessing work. For instance, 94% of those with learning difficulties are unemployed, as are 84% of young parents, 60% of young offenders, etc.

(LAB) The confidence and aspirations of these groups need to be enhanced. Services, such as Catch 22, or the Young Parents Team, spend time with them and build them up, but once they are confident and ready they also need someone to support them through to the next stage, into employment, which is the part we are trying to put in place with the Vulnerable Learners Scheme.

What other initiatives could help to enhance young people's employability?

(WG) When I worked for Shell International, I was part of a volunteer mentoring scheme, working with a young man over the two years of his GCSEs giving him impartial advice and helping him understand what was needed to get into the world of work.

(LAB) Pre-apprenticeship Level 1 support is also important. Some vulnerable young people need extra support to develop confidence, and we could look at models of how this could be delivered.

What about interns?

(LAB) These tend to be graduates, so are a different age group.

When we went around the county on regeneration visits (which led to the establishment of this Select Committee), we visited an industry in Thanet which employed mostly Eastern European workers. When we asked why, we were told that UK workers tend to work there for very short periods –

sometimes only two weeks – then get bored and leave. Eastern Europeans have a completely different work ethic.

(WG) Employers will always do what is best for their company, so they take on those whom they know will make a commitment, stay for a long time and do the job. We need to address young people's attitudes and work ethic and which jobs they see as being good to do. We could encourage them towards the health and social care sector, for example, where we know there will be lots of growth over the coming years. In the future, employers in Kent will also have to compete more and more with mainland Europe to recruit and keep hold of the best workers.

(LAB) Some young people are simply not job-ready and need more realistic preparation at school.

(WG) There are other activities which can help them develop the skills they need to be ready for work, such as voluntary work and community activities which help to develop leadership skills and responsibility.

What can the Select Committee do to help with your work?

(WG) Please support marketing and promotion as a vital part of the Apprenticeship Strategy!